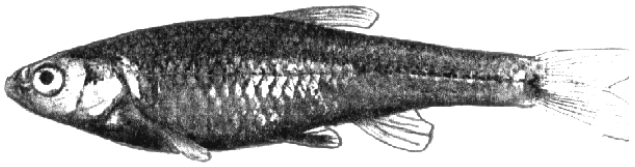
Arkansas River shiner ***Notropis girardi***

Status: A federally threatened species (63 FR 64771; November 23, 1998) with designated critical habitat (66 FR 18002; April 4, 2001). In Texas, the critical habitat encompasses areas of the Canadian River, as well as its riparian corridor, in Potter, Oldham, and Hemphill Counties.



Species Description: The Arkansas River shiner is a small, robust shiner with a small, dorsally flattened head, rounded snout, and small subterminal mouth. Adults attain a maximum size of 2 inches (51 mm). Dorsal, anal, and pelvic fins all have eight rays and there is usually a small, black chevron present at the base of the caudal fin. Dorsal coloration tends to be light tan, with silvery sides gradually grading to white on the belly.

Distribution:

Historically, the Arkansas River shiner was widespread and abundant throughout the western portions of the Arkansas River Basin in Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The species is now almost entirely restricted to the Canadian /South Canadian River in Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.

Habitat: Typical habitat is flowing water over sand in streams or rivers. Adult shiners are uncommon in quiet pools or backwaters and rarely occur in tributaries having deep water and bottoms of mud or stone. Adult shiners prefer to orient into the current on the "lee" side of transverse sand ridges and feed on organisms washed downstream. Their food habits have not been recorded but are presumed to consist of small aquatic invertebrates or plankton.

Threats: Within the last 20 years, this species has disappeared from over 80% of its historic range. The species is threatened by habitat destruction and modification from stream dewatering/depletion due to diversion of surface water and excessive groundwater pumping, water quality degradation, construction of impoundments, competition with introduced species (such as the Red River shiner, *Notropis bairdi*), and incidental capture by commercial fisherman. Spawning occurs from June to August, generally occurring in July, usually coinciding with flood flows following heavy rains. The eggs drift downstream and hatch within 24-48 hours. Spawning is flow dependent; a dramatic change in flow apparently stimulates spawning. The life span is likely less than 3 years in the wild.